



SOCIAL MEDIA NOT IMPORTANT TO MY CAREER SAY A THIRD OF UK MARKETERS

A quarter of marketers don't see the relevance of social media to customer service

Two thirds of marketers believe that the Board does not understand social media

13th January 2010: Despite social media spend now expected to exceed £1.9billion by 2014, making it a bigger marketing channel than both email and mobile¹, an [ICM](#) survey has found that UK marketers do not feel they need to embrace social media to develop their own career.

Launched today on behalf of insight and communications group [Creston plc](#) (ICM's parent company), the survey talked to 250 UK marketing professionals about the impact and ownership of social media activity within their businesses. Despite evidence of the usage of social media continuing to soar, with social utility, Facebook, adding 100 million new users in just nine months², almost one in three marketing professionals are not recognising the growing importance of social media in the context of their own career and professional development. It is no surprise therefore that 60% of these have no current [social media strategy](#) for their business.

Despite this, marketers do clearly recognise the impact of social media on the business, but only in the future. A significant 88% believe that social media activity will impact brand reputation, 79% think that engaging in social media will help increase customers and 71% see a direct correlation between social media activity and market share in the future. However, only 14% of respondents agree social media currently has a significant impact on the brand reputation of their organisation and this lack of immediacy concerning social media activity also carries through to other parts of the business, including product development, new customers, staff attraction/retention and share price.

When asked which departments engage most in social media activity, only a third (36%) of marketers said it fell to them to take the lead, but were also not clear on any other department that would be more involved in social media and the relevance of social media outside of marketing. For example, only 24% of respondents believed that social media has any relevance to customer service.

¹ Forrester – Interactive Marketing Forecast

² Econsultancy

This, despite well publicised examples, such as the United Airlines complaint Youtube video ([United Breaks Guitar](#)) by Dave Carroll which got over 2.5 million hits and the more recent blog ([Tunisia trip hell](#)) by Andy Sharman on his bad experience with Thomson Holidays which has received over 10,000 hits to date. Both showed how consumers can use social media to communicate about brands and also act as a lesson for brands to monitor and respond to customers' concerns.

Further insight shows that the lack of ownership concerning social media activity appears to start at the top of the business with two thirds of respondents believing that the Board does not understand social media. 88% also think that the Board chooses not to support it, which means that social media is not being led from the top down within an organisation. With no clear buy-in or direction from the top, silos of social media activity are left to form and therefore it is not surprising to see that over half of the businesses surveyed do not recognise any benefit from a designated multi-discipline team.

[Don Elgie](#), CEO of Creston plc, comments: “We were very surprised to see that there was such apathy around social media from marketers in terms of furthering their career. Eighty per cent of the UK’s online population are now using social media³, and the concern is that many marketing professionals are ignoring the impact social media activity could have right now on both their business and their own career.

Half of the marketers that took part in the survey also identified their own lack of experience in this area, which points to a clear need for training. Crucially, they also need support from the senior management to encourage a strategic and joined-up approach to drive successful social media activity that will successfully impact the business.”

Further research findings:

- Despite not seeing social media having an immediate impact on their business, UK marketing professionals have an overwhelming understanding of the future impact:
 - 37 per cent don’t think social media currently has an impact on the brand reputation of their business
 - 88 per cent expect it to have an impact on the business in the future, including 71 per cent thinking it will have an impact on market share and 79 per cent thinking it will have an impact on customer retention and acquisition
 - 69 per cent agree social media is not the latest business fad, which will not matter in a few years

³ *comScore's World Metrix audience measurement*

- UK marketing professionals understand the need to develop a social media strategy, but lack the skills and resource to do so:
 - 29 per cent see developing a social media strategy as overwhelming, and do not know where to start
 - 24 per cent feel they are biting off more than they can chew by starting direct conversations with customers
 - 56 per cent lack the resource to develop a social media strategy
 - 38 per cent have no plans at all to develop a social media strategy over the next 12 months

- UK marketing professionals see social media as providing good value for money:
 - 75 per cent think it provides value for money regarding brand awareness and equity
 - 74 per cent it provides value for money regarding reputation

- Social media is currently fairly evenly dispersed across the business:
 - Marketing, communications, public relations and online teams engage in the most activity (36 per cent; 15 percent; 14 per cent and 10 per cent respectively)
 - 50 per cent think it's of most relevance to marketing
 - 48 per cent think social media activity is most relevant to PR, yet only 14 per cent say the department engages in it
 - 24 per cent think social media is relevant to customer service, yet only 4 per cent think customer service engages in activity

- Despite the perceived importance of social media, it is unsupported at Board level:
 - 66 per cent think social media strategy is not adequately understood, and 58 per cent think social media is not adequately supported by the CEO and Board

- Breakdown of current social media activity:
 - Businesses currently engage most on business networks such as LinkedIn (41 per cent); followed by social networks such as Facebook (37 per cent)
 - Only 9 per cent of businesses use customer collaboration tools, such as Ideastorm for Dell
 - Of those organisations which do not currently have a social media strategy, current engagement is primarily on business networks (30 per cent), followed by blogging (24 per cent)

NB: The research was conducted by ICM during October-November 2009. 250 interviews were conducted with senior marketing professionals across the UK. All respondents worked in businesses with a minimum of 500 employees.

About Creston Group

[Creston](#) (LON:CRE) is an insight and communications group which provides world-class market-relevant insight, strategy, creation and activation solutions to deliver brand-led growth in a rapidly changing consumer world. Creston Group expertise includes market research, insight, advertising, PR and marketing communications, including health marketing, direct marketing, customer relationship marketing and digital marketing.

Creston Group companies include industry leading agencies with national and international blue chip clients: Tullio Marshall Warren, Delaney Lund Knox Warren, ICM, Marketing Sciences, newvista research, PAN Advertising, Nelson Bostock Communications, Red Door Communications, The Real Adventure and EMO.

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